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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to: describe successful working relationships between higher education and state agencies for Part H (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) personnel planning; identify factors that facilitated those relationships; and formulate policy recommendations. Indepth interviews with key persons involved in Part H personnel planning in five states were conducted and related documents reviewed. Distinct characteristics of states exhibiting cooperative relationships included: an attitude that encouraged policies and resources for education; consistency in university and state planning leadership positions; support from state administrators and/or legislators; and availability of resources. Common issues were identified in the areas of certification, legislation, access to resources, outreach, and interagency cooperation. Inclusive, collaborative meetings and establishment of formal coordinating structures and procedures were found to be facilitating factors. Three policy recommendations are offered: (1) states should form a consortium of state agency, higher education, and professional organization representatives to address statewide planning for special education; (2) states should provide higher education with financial incentives to increase personnel preparation programs; and (3) a procedure should be established to establish a semi-formal link between state agencies and higher education to address mutual needs and goals. (Three references) (DB)

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SHORT REPORT

Carolina Policy Studies Program
May, 1992

STATE AGENCY - HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION FOR PART H PERSONNEL PREPARATION

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Part H of IDEA calls for comprehensive early intervention service delivery to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Implementation of such programs will require qualified personnel to deliver services, which presents a complex challenge to state personnel planners. Progress has been slow in Part H personnel development (Harbin, Gallagher & Lillie, 1991). One barrier to meeting the personnel demands of Part H has been a lack of cooperation between higher education and state agencies in personnel planning (Bruder, Klosowski & Daguio, 1989).

The major focus of this study was to describe successful working relationships between higher education and state agencies for Part H personnel planning; to identify factors that facilitated these relationships; and to formulate policy recommendations accordingly.

Five states that had demonstrated cooperation in planning for personnel development were selected from a pool of nominations solicited from early intervention experts nationwide. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key persons involved in Part H personnel planning for each state, and through a review of related documents. Qualitative research methodology was utilized to analyze the data.

Patterns and themes emerged from within-state and cross-state data analysis that described (1) distinct attributes that characterized states exhibiting cooperative working relationships, (2) common issues affecting collaborative personnel development, and (3) factors that facilitated and maintained cooperation.

Characteristics of Success

States that supported cooperative working relationships could be characterized by specific attributes, such as:

- a philosophy or attitude toward action and progress, that included policies and resources for education in its mission
- consistency in university and state planning leadership positions
- support from top-level state administrators and/or legislators
- resources of time and money that were made available for personnel planning.

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Common Issues

Efforts to address issues related to planning for Part H also influenced collaboration. Such issues included:

• Certification - states that had established certification for early intervention personnel were farther along in developing cooperative working relationships between state certification agencies and universities that housed early intervention personnel preparation programs.

• Legislation - states with early intervention legislation in place, such as an entitlement for services to children aged 3-5, were farther ahead in collaboration for personnel development than states that were in the process of acquiring legislation for early intervention.

• Access to resources - states with a history of early intervention programs had acquired knowledge and skills for obtaining monetary and personnel resources necessary to support planning efforts.

• Outreach - attempts to increase personnel preparation opportunities throughout the state resulted in formal planning structures that targeted widespread information dissemination. Such efforts required the collaboration of higher education and state agency personnel.

• Interagency cooperation - a willingness to communicate across divisions within an agency eased communication between the agencies and higher education.

Facilitating Factors

A cross-state analysis of conditions and actions that facilitated cooperation revealed common ingredients of successful cooperative working relationships:

• Experienced and consistent leadership established and maintained working relationships between higher education and state agency personnel for early intervention.

• Inclusive, collaborative meetings that took place early in the planning process for Part H encouraged formal and informal communication between state and university personnel.

• Formal structures, for example, Interagency Coordinating Council personnel development committees, were organized to involve invested parties and served to facilitate formal and informal communication.

• Procedures were developed to formally delineate duties for cooperative planning and implementation efforts.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following policy recommendations can be formulated:

1) States should form a consortium of state agency, higher education, and professional organization representatives to address statewide planning for special education.

2) States should provide higher education with financial incentives (i.e., stipends, faculty funding) to increase personnel preparation programs.

3) A procedure should be established, such as a "memorandum of understanding" to establish a semi-formal link between state agencies and higher education in terms of needs and mutual goals on collaborative projects.

For further information, please see the full CPSP report entitled, *Higher Education and State Agency Cooperation for Part H Personnel Planning.* Copies are available by written request from James J. Gallagher, Carolina Policy Studies Program, NationsBank Plaza, Suite 300, 137 E. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

References

Bruder, M., Klosowski, S. & Daguio, C. (1989). Personnel standards for ten professional disciplines serving children under P.L. 99-457: Results from a national survey. Division of Child and Family Studies, Department of Pediatrics, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington, CT.

Harbin, G., Gallagher, J., & Lillie, T. (1991). Status of states' progress in implementing Part H of IDEA: Report 3#. Carolina Policy Studies Program, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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